DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 340 154 EC 300 803

TITLE	Delivering Special Education: Statistics and Trends. Revised. ERIC Digest #E463.
INSTITUTION	Council for Exceptional Children, Reston, Va.; ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, Reston, Va.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	EDO-EC-91-16
PUB DATE	Nov 91
CONTRACT	RI88062007
NOTE	3p.; Revision of ED 308 686.
AVAILABLE FROM	Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091-1589 ($1.00 each, minimum order $5.00 prepaid, product no. E-463).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071) -- Statistical Data (110)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Delivery Systems; *Disabilities; *Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Legislation; *Handicap Identification; *Incidence; Prenatal Influences; Preschool Education; *Special Education; Statistical Data; Substance Abuse; Teacher Supply and Demand; Trend Analysis
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests; Prereferral Intervention

ABSTRACT

This digest presents summary statistics addressing the following questions: (1) "How are children with disabilities defined?" (2) "Who are the students served?" (3) "Where are these students receiving their special education?" and (4) "How many teachers are needed?" The digest also examines past and present trends and their implications for the future of special education. Trends identified include: a possible future decrease in special education students as prereferral interventions serve "hard to teach" students; a continuing decrease in the number of students identified as mentally retarded (possibly due to more restrictive standards, a corresponding increased number of students identified as learning disabled, and avoidance of overrepresentation of minority students as mentally retarded); a possible increase in the number of children served due to prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol; and increased numbers of very young children served as a result of federal mandates. Includes 10 references. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED340154

ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children
THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
1920 Association Drive • Reston, VA 22091-1589
FAX: 703/264-9494

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ERIC Digest

Revised NOVEMBER 1991
DIGEST#E 463

EDO-EC-91-16

EC300803

DELIVERING SPECIAL EDUCATION STATISTICS AND TRENDS

The 1990 Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)(formerly the Education of the Handicapped Act) guarantees "that all children with disabilities have available to them. . . a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their needs. . ." In order to fully meet these goals, IDEA has: 1 Expanded the definition of "special education" to include "instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and instruction in physical education" and 2) extended "related services" to include "social work services" and "rehabilitative counseling." In addition, the term "handicap" has been replaced throughout the Act, with the term "disability" and terminology using "people first" has been utilized.

How Are Children With Disabilities Defined?

The disabilities previously addressed by law are listed in the table below. Major additions from IDEA are the inclusion of "autism" and "traumatic brain injury" as separate categories under the definition of children with disabilities. Eligibility is based on the fact of a child's condition "adversely affecting the child's educational performance."

Eligibility under IDEA still establishes a two-pronged criterion. First, does the child actually have one or more of the disabilities listed? Secondly, does the child require special education and/or related services?

Not all children who have a disability require special education; many are able, and should, attend school without any program modification.

Who Are The Students Served ?

According to the *Thirteenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of Education of the Handicapped Act* (1990), 4,687,620 children with disabilities were served during the 1988-1989 school year. Of these, 94.2% were served under EHA. This was an increase of 2.2% over the 1987-1988 data and is the greatest increase since 1980-81. The number and percentage of each handicapped condition served under Chapter 1 of the Education and Consolidation Improvement Act—State Operated Programs (ECIA-SOP) and IDEA Part B are shown in the following table.

Handicapping Condition	Number	Percentage
Specific Learning Disabilities	2,064,892	48.5
Speech or Language Impairments	976,186	22.9
Mental Retardation	566,150	13.3
Serious Emotional Disturbance	382,570	9.0
Multiple Disabilities	87,956	2.1
Hearing Impairments	58,164	1.4
Orthopedic Impairments	47,999	1.1
Other Health Impairments	53,165	1.2
Visual Impairments	22,960	0.5
Deaf-Blindness	1,634	0.0

The overall picture is that the population of students served with learning disabilities has grown, while the number of students served with speech or language impairments and mental retardation have declined.

Where Are These Students Receiving Their Special Education?

During the 1988-1989 school year, the majority of children and youth with handicaps received special education and related services in settings with nonhandicapped students. Over 31% received special education primarily in regular classes. More than 37% received special education and related services primarily in resource rooms, while 24% received special education and related services in separate classes within a regular education building. These three settings accounted for over 93% of the placements; thus, most students with handicaps were being educated in buildings with their nonhandicapped peers. The remaining children and youth were educated in public/private separate day school facilities (5.2%) (which is a decrease of 12,448 pupils), public/private residential facilities (0.8%), and homebound or hospital environments (0.9%).

How Many Teachers Are Needed?

During 1988-1989, 286,546 special education teachers reportedly served children with handicaps. This was an increase of about .1% over the 1987-1988 school year. Furthermore, an additional 27,977 teachers were needed to fill vacancies, especially in the areas of learning disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, and speech or language disabilities. These four categories, together with cross-categorical teachers account for 97% of all teachers needed. Approximately 9% of the teachers were needed for the categories of other health impaired, hard of hearing and deaf, multihandicapped, orthopedically impaired, visually handicapped, and deaf-blind.

Past And Present Trends – What Effect On The Future Of Special Education ?

In the early years following enactment of Part B, rapid growth in the number of children served as disabled was primarily due to new Federal categories of children with disabilities (e.g. children with specific learning disabilities), and to program development and implementation. Certain factors, however may decrease the future growth in the number of children served. A number of states have implemented pilot programs and other restructuring efforts to educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom environment. One successful method has been using prereferral interventions, (modifications of teaching strategies, instructional practices and classroom management) prior to referral for special education evaluation. By effectively accommodating the needs of "difficult to teach" students in the regular classroom

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

(Fuchs, Fuchs, Bahr, Fernstrom & Stecker, 1990) there may be a significant decrease in the growth of children served as disabled. Prereferral activities typically include school-based, problem-solving consultation teams which provide assistance and recommendations to the regular education teacher regarding strategies aimed at mainstreaming "difficult to teach" students in the regular classroom.

There are several possible explanations for the continuing and dramatic decrease in prevalence of students with mental retardation. First, criteria used for identification of mental retardation have become significantly more restrictive. More stringent criteria for mental retardation may have contributed to the growing incidence rates of specific learning disabilities; that is, children and youth with mild to moderate cognitive deficits who would have previously been classified as having mental retardation may now tend to be classified as having learning disabilities. Litigation may also have been a factor in the decrease in the incidence of mental retardation identification. It is highly probable that many States, in response to court rulings, have taken action to reduce over-representation of minority students with mental retardation. In addition, some observers believe that in recent years, many professionals and parents have tended to substitute labels such as learning disability, developmental delay, or developmental disability for the mental retardation label.

Other factors, however, could increase the number of children served. There is emerging evidence (Greer, 1990), for example, that substantial numbers of pregnant women are using alcohol and/or other drugs. Many specialists believe that these children are likely to have significant learning and behavioral disabilities that may require specialized school services. One other factor that is increasing the number of children served is the mandate of the 1986 Amendments to EHA, now IDEA, focusing on the needs of young children with disabilities through two programs—the Preschool Grants Program for 3- through 5-year-olds and the Infants and Toddlers Program for children from birth to age 2. However, even without these mandates, these young children would very likely have been identified at a later age. Moreover, early identification and intervention may result in the remediation of some of the disabilities of these young children. Such remediation may, in turn, result in a decreased need for services for these children later on.

RESOURCES

Algozzine, B., Ruhl, K. & Ramsey, R. (1991). *Behaviorally disordered? Assessment for identification and instruction.* Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Ballard, J., Ramirez, B., & Zantal-Wiener, K. (1987). *P.L. 94-142, Section 504, and P.L. 99-457. Understanding what they are and are not.* Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children. (ED 295392)

Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L. S., Bahr, M. W., Fernstrom, P., & Stecker, P. M. (1990). Prereferral intervention: A prescriptive approach. *Exceptional Children, 56,* 493-514. (EJ 408565)

Gable, R. A., Laycock, V. K., Maroney, S. A., & Smith, C. R. (1991). *Preparing to integrate students with behavioral disorders.* Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Greer, J. V. (1990). The drug babies. *Exceptional Children, 56,* 382-384. (EJ 406972)

Guidelines for the delineation of roles and responsibilities for the safe delivery of specialized health care in the education setting. (1990). Developed by the Joint Task Force for the Management of Children with Specialized Health Needs of the American Federation of Teachers, The Council for Exceptional Children, National Association of School Nurses, Inc., and the National Education Association. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children. (ED 322705)

Lewis, T. J., Heflin, J., & DiGangi, S. (1991). *Teaching students with behavioral disorders: Basic questions and answers.* Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Part B (P.L. 94-142) of The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Title 20 of the United States Code, Sections 1400-1420.

Vincent, L. J., Poisen, M. K., Cole, C. K., Woodruff, G., & Griffith, D. R. *Born substance exposed, educationally vulnerable.* Reston, Va: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Thirteenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act 1990. Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Education.

ERIC Digests are in the public domain and may be freely reproduced and disseminated.

This publication was prepared with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, under Contract No. R188062007. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or the Department of Education.